

Sterling ACADEMY

Opening doors to a lifetime of learning.

STUDENT/PARENT HANDBOOK

Version 10.2



Sterling
ACADEMY

Opening doors to a lifetime of learning

POLICY HIGHLIGHTS



Students are REQUIRED to meet with a teacher via webcam (or some type of video call) before each midterm and final exam. Not having a webcam or video call device is NOT AN EXCUSE! It is required for the course.

Students are also required to have a live contact (video or phone) with each teacher once a month.

ATTENDANCE

FULL-TIME STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO SPEND AN AMOUNT OF TIME ON THEIR COURSEWORK THAT IS COMPARABLE TO A BRICKS-AND-MORTAR SCHOOL — ABOUT 20-30 HOURS PER WEEK OF COURSEWORK. IF YOU DON'T SPEND ENOUGH TIME COMPLETING ASSIGNMENTS, YOU WILL GET BEHIND.

PLAGIARISM
CAN GET YOU
EXPELLED

Do your own work! Copying and pasting from other sources, besides being theft of someone else's work, doesn't help you digest the material you've studied in order to learn it. You're here to LEARN the material, not just jump through hoops by any means necessary. There will be consequences if you plagiarize. See page 28 for details.

Lazy work

If you turn in lazy work (bogus answers, don't follow the requirements, etc.), the teacher can reset your assignment and make you do it again. Do it right the first time for the most efficient progress.

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Dear Parents/Guardians and Students:

Thank you in advance for reading the Parent/Student Handbook. Our policies and procedures are detailed in the Handbook, and we are sure many of your questions and/or concerns are addressed here.

Please make sure that both parent and student have reviewed all the information in this handbook. If you have any questions not addressed here, please feel free to contact us.

After you have thoroughly read this handbook, you will both need to sign the Parent/Student Handbook Acknowledgement, attesting that you have read and agree to the policies and procedures contained within. After signing, please scan the signed form, and return to the school. We appreciate your understanding that this and all other required documents need to be received in our office in order for the student to begin (or for re-enrollments, to continue) in our program.

We want all of our students to have a successful experience at Sterling Academy. If you have any questions please contact the school office, Monday – Friday from 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM Pacific time. Our office number is 626-360-8012.

Sincerely,

Sterling Administration

Sterling Academy <https://www.sterling.academy>



Vision Statement

Education is the key to our students' future. Sterling Academy strives to enable students to acquire that key by providing an alternative path to middle and high school graduation, and setting them on the course of a lifelong practice of self-motivated learning, in an environment that prepares them for a successful life in the global 21st century.

Mission Statement

- 1) We provide a quality, rigorous education while taking into account each student's learning style.**
- 2) We foster an environment which allows students, without the restrictions of time and place, to take ownership and responsibility of their education by being flexible with course selections and course pacing in order to help them reach their desired goals.**
- 3) We provide access to cutting edge 21st century technologies; create diversity through curriculum and student body in order to give them a competitive advantage in this global 21st century.**
- 4) We foster a school culture based on a strong and effective partnership between our administration, teachers, parents, and students.**

Introduction

Sterling Academy is an accredited high school that offers all of its courses online. We are accredited by Cognia (formerly called AdvancED) through SACS (Southern Association of Colleges & Schools), the organization that accredits most public schools and universities in the region, as well as many private schools. With this accreditation, you can be certain that courses taken at Sterling Academy will be readily accepted by other middle schools, high schools, colleges and universities nationwide.

Our goal is to provide a rigorous course of study that gives our students a solid education and prepares them well for their life after high school, whether it be university or the working world. Full-time students should expect to spend 30 hours per week on their coursework, which is similar to the amount of time a student would spend in academic classes in a bricks-and-mortar school. An advantage of studying at our school is that our students can arrange those approximately 30 hours into whatever arrangement suits them best, since we do not have set class times, nor do we have prescribed due dates for assignments. (Students will need to abide by their pacing calendar in order to finish their courses by the end of their year, however.) This flexibility enables students to pursue their studies according to their own body clocks, periods of time of concentration, and their scheduling with other activities, giving them the ability to work how it's best for them, increasing their chances for success.

Students must not approach studying online as an easy way out. Keeping up with the course work requires self-discipline and persistence. The good news is that learning these qualities young in life will give our students an advantage for their entire lives since they will have developed good work habits at a young age.

Teachers are available to help students understand course material. Due to the asynchronous nature of our school, students need to understand that a teacher may not be immediately available the instant that help is needed, but the teacher will respond to the student and if "live" help is needed (via webcam, phone, chat session or Zoom), an appointment will be made. It is up to the student to take the initiative to let the teacher know when help is needed. Students must take charge of their own learning in this environment.

Because our teachers generally help students one-on-one, Sterling Academy provides a great opportunity for students to get help where they need it most. Also, when a student does understand the material, he or she will not have to be slowed down by waiting for others who do not understand (as in a classroom situation). As a result, students can proceed at their optimum pace and experience the best learning possible.

Tips for Students

Welcome to Sterling Academy! Our school gives students the flexibility and freedom to study anywhere, at anytime. However, this freedom requires discipline, commitment, and organization in order to be successful. With all of the outside distractions of everyday life, it is easy to fall behind. The following are tips for keeping you on track:

1. **Make a plan.** When you first log into your courses in Sterling Academy, look through your Course Map and review all of the work that is ahead of you. Review the Course Map in Edgenuity each day to see how many and what assignments you need to complete that day in order to stay on target. You can also use the calendar in Canvas to set your own due dates for activities in your courses.
2. **Time-Management and Organization.** Schedule certain work times and commit to your routine. Be sure to give yourself adequate time in each course – on average, you should spend about two hours per day in each of your three courses. Designate a certain study area to keep your schoolwork organized.
3. **Note Taking.** We have many tools in our curriculum for you to use, one of those being e-notes. Making use of the e-note tool will reinforce your learning and help you through the courses' activities and quizzes. Research by Edgenuity has shown that students who take notes in the curriculum get better grades on average than those who do not take notes.
4. **Communication.** Be assertive and take ownership of your learning. If at any time you begin to fall behind, struggle, feel overwhelmed, or have any questions, please reach out to your instructor. Our teachers are here to help students and can assist you in getting you back on track and feeling confident.
5. **Participate and Make Connections** with other students. You will have the opportunity to extend coursework through the use of threaded discussions. This will allow you to learn from and get to know fellow students. Remember your netiquette. Use proper grammar and punctuation, express yourself with appropriate and positive language, be courteous, and avoid using all capital letters.

Tips for Parents and Guardians

The following are ways parents and guardians can assist in their students' online learning experience:

1. **Support your child in their online learning adventure.** Consider your child's level of responsibility, personality, and independence, and adjust your involvement accordingly. In general, the younger the child, the more attention you will need to give to them to ensure that they are completing assignments at a pace that keeps them on target.
2. **Guide your child.** Become aware of your child's study plan and schedule and encourage them to stick to it.
3. **Facilitate learning.** Help your child designate a quiet area to complete their schoolwork.
4. **Become involved.** You will have a parent portal where you can monitor your child's progress and grades. Contact the instructors with any questions or concerns. Add at least one source of contact (email, or cell number for text messages) to your child's account.

Setting Target Dates (Study Plan)

When you sign up for your courses, you need to inform Registration what you want your Target Dates to be. The Target Date is the date that you want to be finished with each course.

The default arrangement for full-time high school students is as follows: Students will be given three 1-semester courses at a time, and are advised to finish those courses in three months. Then, the next three 1-semester courses will be given. In total, you will have four 3-month blocks of time, each block for working on a set of three 1-semester courses, totaling 12 months for one grade level. If you would like to schedule these differently – for example, if you'd like to finish in 9 months and have your summer off -- let your advisor know as you make your plan for the year.

Below: An example of a 9th grade 12-month class plan

Course Name	Semesters?	Start Date	Target Date
Online Learning & Digital Citizenship	1 of 1	9/1/2019	11/30/2019
Algebra 1A	1 of 2	9/1/2019	11/30/2019
English 1A	1 of 2	9/1/2019	11/30/2019
Algebra 1B	2 of 2	12/1/2019	2/28/2020
English 1B	2 of 2	12/1/2019	2/28/2020
World Cultural Geography A	1 of 2	12/1/2019	2/28/2020
World Cultural Geography B	2 of 2	3/1/2020	5/31/2020
Biology A	1 of 2	3/1/2020	5/31/2020
Latin I A	1 of 2	3/1/2020	5/31/2020
Biology B	2 of 2	6/1/2020	8/31/2020
Latin I B	2 of 2	6/1/2020	8/31/2020
Health	1 of 1	6/1/2019	8/31/2019

Below: An example of a 10th grade 9½ -month class plan. (This plan creates a 2-week break at Christmas/New Year's, so the second session is longer.)

Course Name	Semesters?	Start Date	Target Date
Online Learning & Digital Citizenship	1 of 1	9/1/2019	11/9/2019
Geometry A	1 of 2	9/1/2019	11/9/2019
English 2A	1 of 2	9/1/2019	11/9/2019
Geometry B	2 of 2	11/10/2019	1/31/2020
English 2B	2 of 2	11/10/2019	1/31/2020
World History A	1 of 2	11/10/2019	1/31/2020
World History B	2 of 2	2/1/2020	4/4/2020
Chemistry A	1 of 2	2/1/2020	4/4/2020

Latin II A	1 of 2	2/1/2020	4/4/2020
Chemistry B	2 of 2	4/5/2020	6/12/2020
Latin II B	2 of 2	4/5/2020	6/12/2020
Personal Fitness (PE)	1 of 1	4/5/2020	6/12/2020

The default arrangement for full-time middle school students is as follows: Students will be given four 1-semester courses, and are advised to finish those courses in six months. Then, the second semester courses will be given. If you would like to have the summer off (or other period of break between grade levels), then let your advisor know you want a shorter schedule.

Below: A sample 7th grade 10-month plan to allow for a summer break.

Course Name	Semesters?	Start Date	Target Date
Middle School Language Arts 2A	1 of 2	9/1/2019	1/31/2020
Grade 7 Mathematics A	1 of 2	9/1/2019	1/31/2020
Middle School Earth/Space Science A	1 of 2	9/1/2019	1/31/2020
Middle School Civics A	2 of 2	11/10/2019	1/31/2020
Middle School Language Arts 2B	2 of 2	2/1/2020	6/30/2020
Grade 7 Mathematics B	2 of 2	2/1/2020	6/30/2020
Middle School Earth/Space Science B	2 of 2	2/1/2020	6/30/2020
Middle School Civics B	2 of 2	2/1/2020	6/30/2020

Students purchasing individual courses (i.e. part-time students) are advised to finish a one semester course within 6 months. The Target Dates could be set for the last day of the six months, or they could be set earlier if you'd like to make a cushion for yourself.

It is important to plan your whole year before you begin – when you want to finish the school year, and thus when you want to finish each block of courses – so that your Assignment Calendar (see page 17) will be properly set, guiding you properly on how much work you need to complete each day. (Adjusting the Start & Target dates changes the Assignment Calendar, which informs you what assignments need to be completed each day in order to finish by the Target Date.)

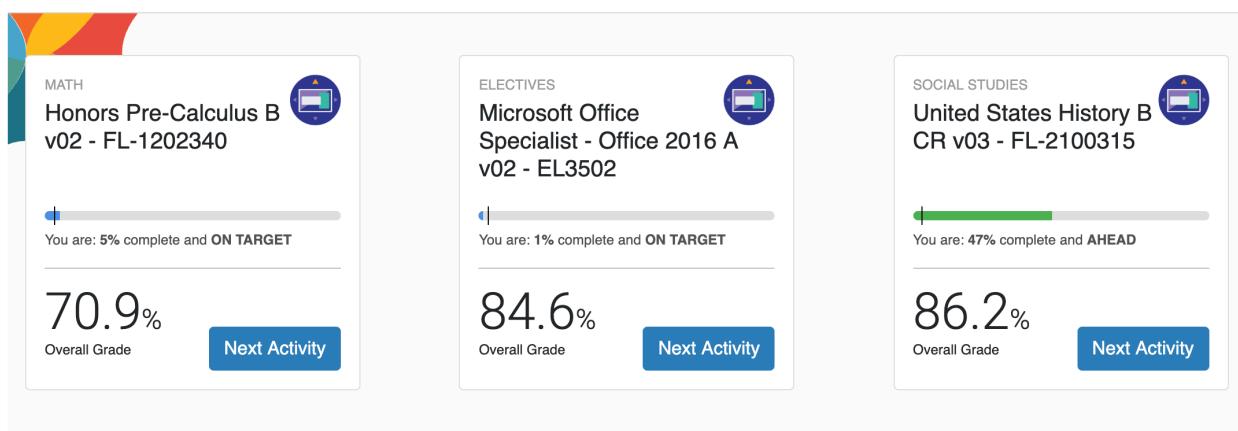
Target Dates can be adjusted (up to the time of your expiration date), but keep in mind

that if you postpone the Target Dates, it will postpone your completion of the school year. Therefore, you want to work hard at staying on pace with your originally set Target Dates.

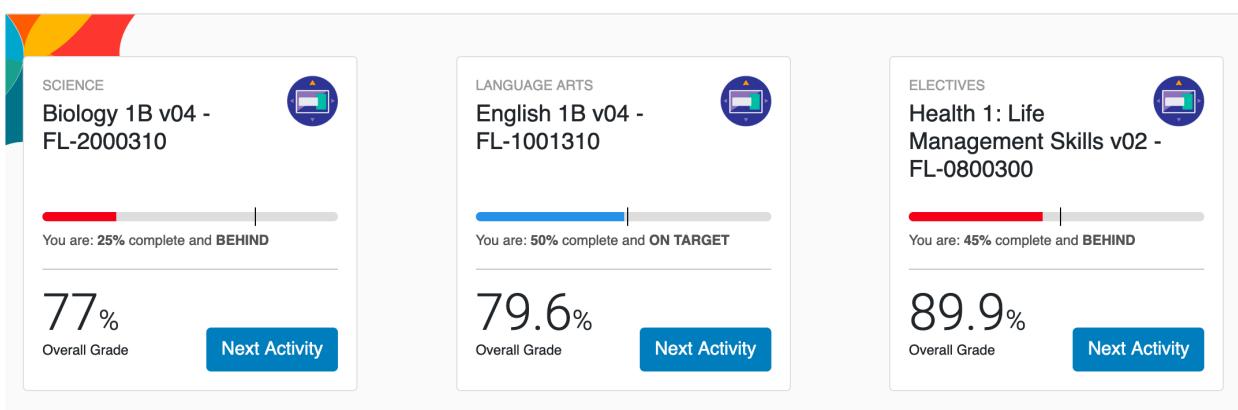
Viewing Your Progress

Each time you enter Edgenuity, you can see your progress in the courses you are taking.

In the example of three course cards below, on the two courses on the left, the student is “on target” – right where this person should be based on the target date. The black vertical line indicates where the student needs to be to stay on target. The horizontal line shows how far in the course that the student has progressed. If the student is on target, the horizontal line will be blue. If the student is ahead of schedule for what’s needed to finish by the target date, the horizontal line will be green, as shown on the course on the right.



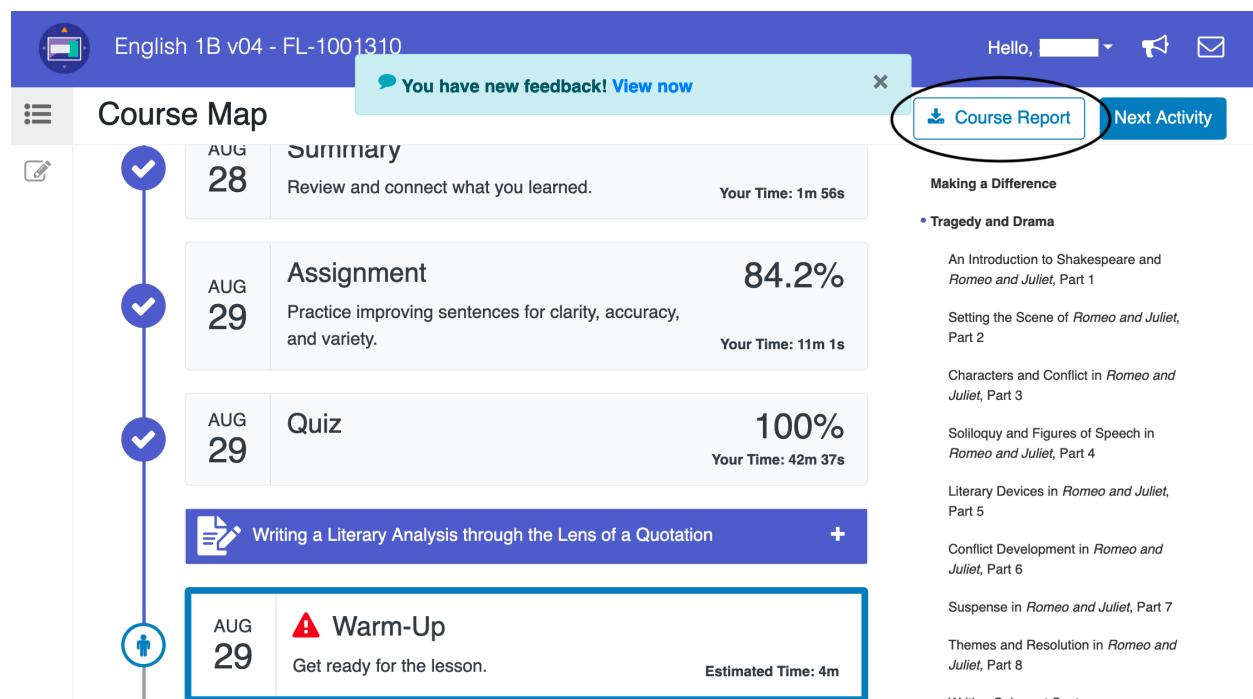
If the student is behind, the horizontal line will show up as red, as is shown in the courses below on the left and right. For the Health course on the right, the student is not too far behind. However, for the Biology course on the left, the student is way behind – look how far the black vertical line is from the current progress.



Course Reports

At any time throughout the course, you can print out a Course Report, which gives you complete information about the course – every assignment you will be doing and the estimated time to complete it. As you complete assignments, the course report will also show you which assignments you have completed and how long it took you, which you can compare to the estimated time. This may help you plan how much time you'll likely need for future assignments, compared to the estimated times.

You can access Course Reports on the main course page, in the upper right corner.



The screenshot shows the 'Course Map' page for a course titled 'English 1B v04 - FL-1001310'. The page displays a timeline of assignments with their due dates, descriptions, completion status, and estimated time. A blue box highlights the 'Course Report' button in the top right corner of the main content area.

Date	Assignment	Status	Estimated Time
AUG 28	Summary	Completed	Your Time: 1m 56s
AUG 29	Assignment	Completed	84.2%
AUG 29	Quiz	Completed	100%
AUG 29	Writing a Literary Analysis through the Lens of a Quotation	Pending	+ (estimated time)
AUG 29	⚠️ Warm-Up	Pending	Estimated Time: 4m

On the right side, there is a sidebar with course-related links: 'Making a Difference', 'Tragedy and Drama', and a list of topics for 'Romeo and Juliet' including 'Introduction', 'Setting the Scene', 'Characters and Conflict', 'Soliloquy and Figures of Speech', 'Literary Devices', 'Conflict Development', 'Suspense', and 'Themes and Resolution'.

Below is an example of a course report.



Course Report: English 1B v04 - FL-1001310

ID:

Overall Grade: 79.6%

Created On: 08/30/2019, 10:41 PM

Start Date: 07/16/2019 Target Date: 10/16/2019

Student Progress: 50% | Target Progress: 52%

Activity	Due	First Attempt	Submitted	Attempts	Est Time	Total Time	Category	Score
Unit: Making a Difference								
Lesson: Introduction to Making a Difference: It's Our World, Too!								
Warm-Up	07/16/2019	07/16/2019	07/16/2019	1	4m	3m 5s		
Instruction	07/16/2019	07/16/2019	07/16/2019	1	16m	16m 31s		
Assignment	07/16/2019	07/16/2019	07/17/2019	1	12m	8m 33s	Assignment	70%
Instruction	07/17/2019	07/17/2019	07/17/2019	1	9m	10m 7s		
Summary	07/17/2019	07/17/2019	07/17/2019	1	2m	2m 22s		
Quiz	07/17/2019	07/17/2019	07/17/2019	1	15m	54m 37s	Quiz	90%
Lesson: Descriptive Language and Character: Iqbal								
Warm-Up	07/17/2019	07/17/2019	07/17/2019	1	4m	3m 5s		
Instruction	07/17/2019	07/17/2019	07/17/2019	1	10m	13m 51s		
Assignment	07/18/2019	07/17/2019	07/23/2019	1	10m	3m 4s	Assignment	85.7%
Instruction	07/18/2019	07/23/2019	07/23/2019	1	7m	9m 51s		
Summary	07/18/2019	07/23/2019	07/23/2019	1	2m	4m 29s		
Quiz	07/18/2019	07/23/2019	07/23/2019	1	15m	57m 56s	Quiz	100%
Lesson: Comparing Accounts of Iqbal's Story								
Warm-Up	07/18/2019	07/23/2019	07/23/2019	1	4m	3m 26s		
Instruction	07/18/2019	07/23/2019	07/23/2019	1	8m	7m 14s		
Assignment	07/19/2019	07/23/2019	07/23/2019	1	7m	2m 18s	Assignment	100%
Instruction	07/19/2019	07/23/2019	07/23/2019	1	7m	7m 13s		
Assignment	07/19/2019	07/23/2019	07/23/2019	1	6m	4m 28s	Assignment	100%
Instruction	07/19/2019	07/23/2019	07/23/2019	1	6m	7m 50s		
Summary	07/19/2019	07/23/2019	07/23/2019	1	2m	2m 8s		
Assignment	07/19/2019	07/23/2019	07/23/2019	1	10m	9m 39s	Assignment	85.7%

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Progress Report – Parent View

Parents may see the progress their students are making using the Family Portal (formerly known as the Parent Portal), which enables parents to see the progress and grades for each course. Here is how the sign-up process works.

Once a student has accessed all of his or her courses in Edgenuity, the parent can send a request to Registration, who will add the parent's email address into the student's data. At this time, the Registration also sets the frequency that a Progress Report will be automatically emailed to the parent by Edgenuity system. Unless otherwise requested, Registration will set these reports to go out once a week.

Once Registration has set up the Family Portal, the system generates an email to the parent notifying of the setup. Then, Registration will send an email with an Activation Code. The parent will use this code to access the Family Portal for the first time, and then choose a password to use for future use of the portal.

You can see visual examples of this process at this Edgenuity [Help page](#).

Once this process has been completed, whenever you as the parent want to access the Family Portal, you can go to the bottom of any page of the www.sterling.academy website and click on the Parent Portal button, which will take you to Edgenuity's Family Portal.

PARENT PORTAL

STUDENT LOGIN

Or, you can go directly to the Parent portal by going to
<https://learn.edgenuity.com/family/>

Once there, you will enter your email address and the password that you have chosen.

Introduction to the School Systems

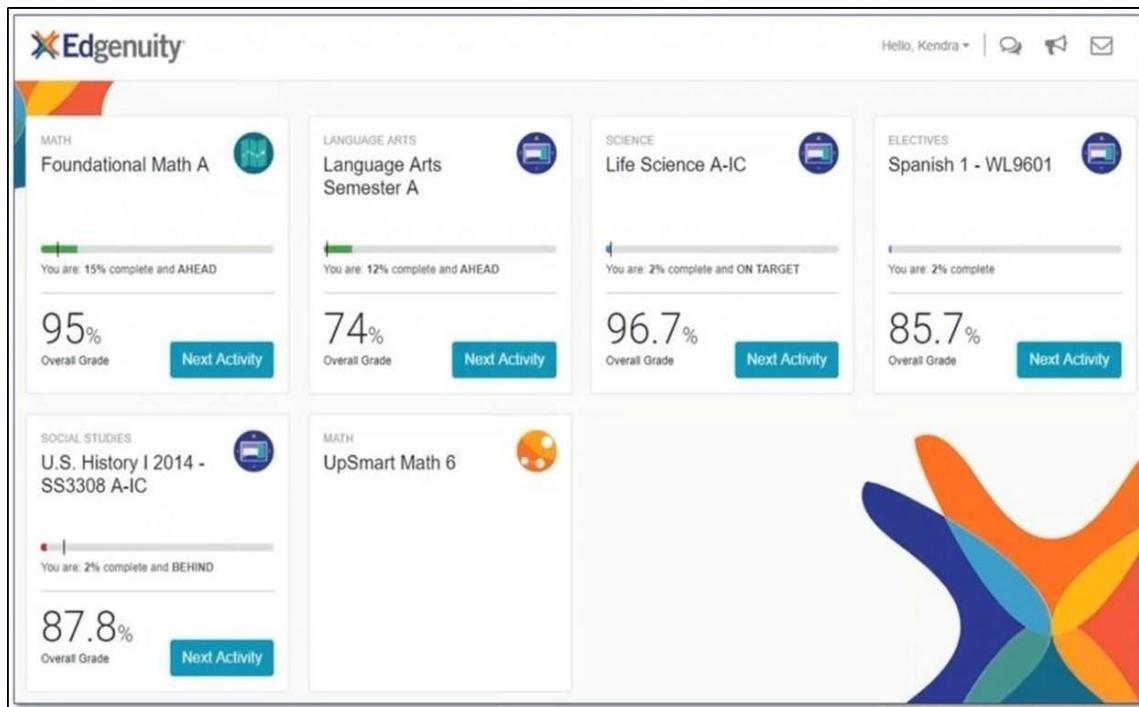
Edgenuity is where the curriculum is for the core academic courses and some electives.

Many elective courses use the eDynamic Learning curriculum (eDL), which requires a separate login to Buzz LMS

We have expanded to include Ignitia (Edgenuity) and Accelerate Education (Partner School of Edgenuity) LMSs. Edgenuity, eDL, Ignitia and AE getting started intro videos or info are now in our website: <https://www.sterling.academy/accredited-virtual-school-forms>

In addition, students are given access to the school Microsoft account. Students will meet with teachers via video in Microsoft Teams. This is also where students can communicate with each other.

Your opening screen in Edgenuity will look like this:



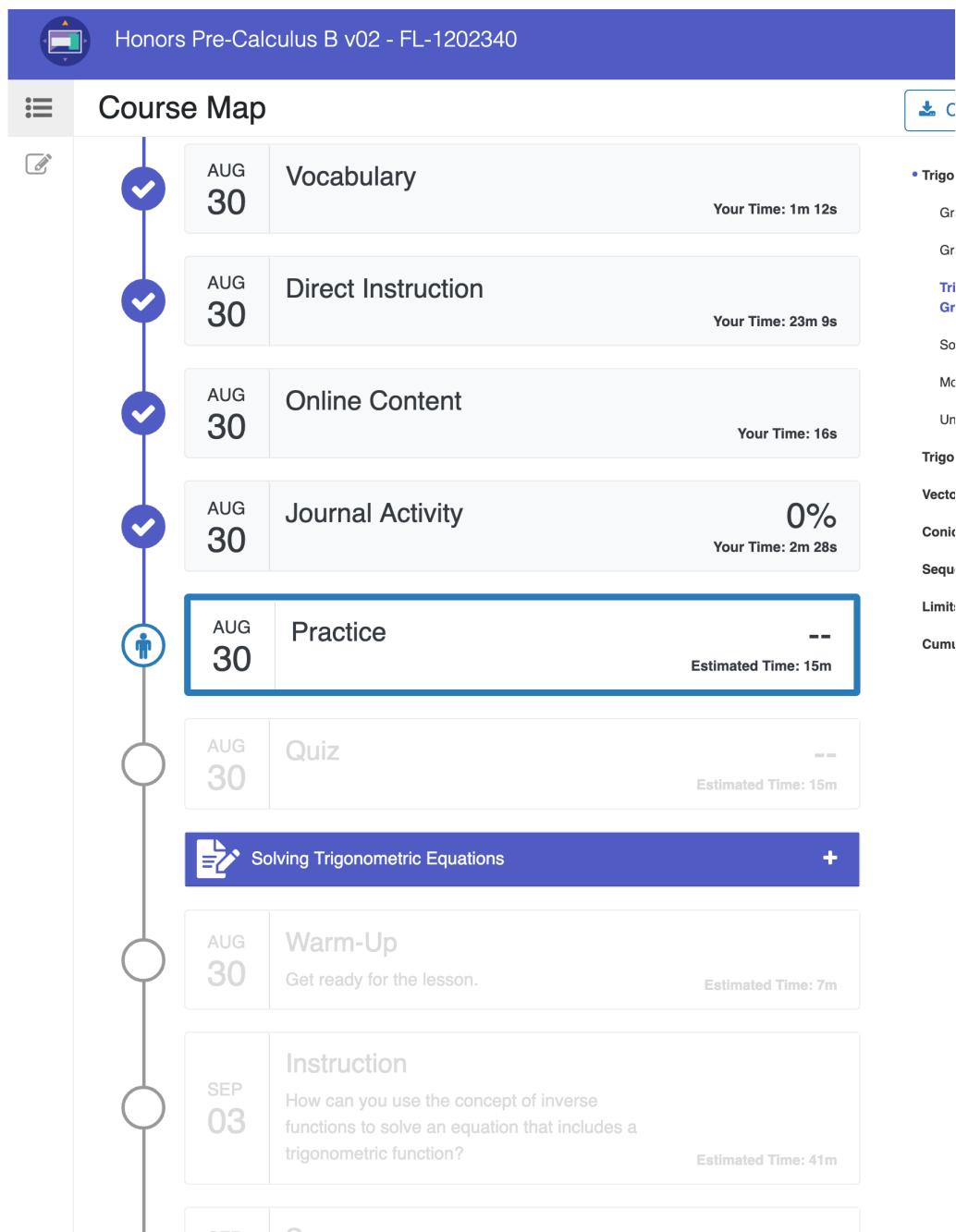
- In the upper right corner, you will see a megaphone icon to indicate announcements.
- Also, there is an envelope icon for email messaging.

To begin working in a course, click on the course card in the course you would like to begin working in.

Once you are in the course, you will have in front of you a course timeline, or what is labeled as a Course Map. (Note: You will not see this if you clicked the button "Next Activity" instead of clicking the course card.) The Course Map shows what assignments you need to complete each day to stay on target in order to finish by your Target Date, the date you have chosen to complete the course.

There are three images below, which show how your course timeline will look when you are on target, behind, and ahead.

First, here's what your timeline will look like when you are on target. This Course Map screenshot was taken on August 30. It is showing what needs to be done today – every assignment stamped August 30 needs to be completed today in order to stay on target. You can see that there are three assignments left to complete today; after that the date shows September 3, which is the next school day.

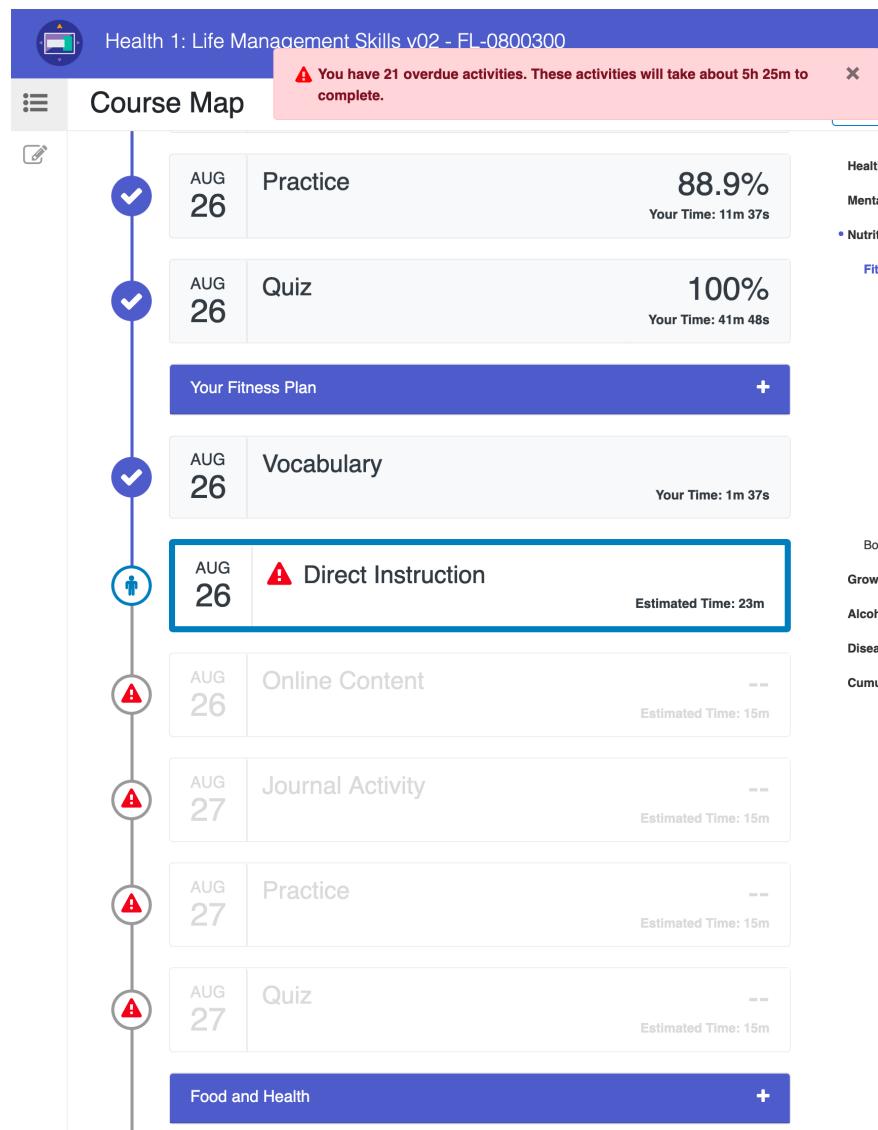


The screenshot shows a Course Map for Honors Pre-Calculus B v02 - FL-1202340. The timeline is on August 30, with the following assignments:

- Vocabulary: Completed (blue checkmark), Your Time: 1m 12s
- Direct Instruction: Completed (blue checkmark), Your Time: 23m 9s
- Online Content: Completed (blue checkmark), Your Time: 16s
- Journal Activity: In progress (blue checkmark), 0%, Your Time: 2m 28s
- Practice: In progress (blue checkmark), --, Estimated Time: 15m (highlighted with a blue border)
- Quiz: Not yet started (white circle)
- Solving Trigonometric Equations: Not yet started (white circle)
- Warm-Up: Not yet started (white circle)
- Instruction: Not yet started (white circle), SEP 03, Estimated Time: 41m

On the right, there is a sidebar with course categories: Trigo, Gr, Gr, Tri, Gr, So, Mc, Un, Trigo, Vectc, Conic, Sequ, Limit, and Cumu.

Second, the image below shows what your timeline looks like if you are behind. Again, this screenshot was taken on August 30. However, the dates showing are August 26 & 27. This means that this student is currently working on assignments that should have been completed several days ago. Now it will take extra work to catch up. The red triangles on the left show assignments that are “past due,” meaning, if you want to finish by the Target Date, you should have finished these already. The light red box on top gives you more information regarding this. In this example, it says, “You have 21 overdue activities. These activities will take about 5h 25m to complete.” You could work 5½ extra hours today or work 2¼ extra hours the next two days in order to catch up (or some other combination). The point is, you want to try to catch up as soon as possible.



The third example, in the image below, shows what your timeline will look like if you are ahead. Again, this screenshot was taken on August 30. Notice that the dates showing are September 5. Thus, you are now working on assignments that don't need to be done until September 5 in order to stay on target.

There are times you may want to work ahead, such as when you know that you are going to take a few days off. Or, you may simply want to beat your target date and finish the course sooner. You can work as far ahead as you like.

The screenshot shows a course map for "United States History A v03 - FL-2100310 A". The timeline is as follows:

- SEP 05**:
 - Summary**: Review and connect what you learned. **90%** completed. **Your Time: 2m 18s**
 - Assignment**: Read an Excerpt from Wilson's War Message and Write an Editorial. **90%** completed. **Your Time: 1h 23m 12s**
 - Quiz**: **80%** completed. **Your Time: 6m 36s**
- SEP 05**: **Warm-Up**: Get ready for the lesson. **Estimated Time: 8m**
- SEP 06**:
 - Instruction**: What factors contributed to the horrors of World War I and to Allied victory? **Estimated Time: 36m**
 - Summary**: Review and connect what you learned. **Estimated Time: 5m**
 - Assignment**: Read "Dulce et Decorum Est.". **Estimated Time: 14m**
 - Quiz**: **Estimated Time: 15m**

A light blue box at the top right says "You have new feedback! [View now](#)". A sidebar on the right lists course topics: Post-Civ, Celebrat Constitu, Immigrat, Expanski, Imperiali, The N, Expan, The S, Histori, Maine, Panan, Neutr, Amerik, A New, Freed, Wilson, Unit Ti, The 1920s, Cumulat.

In the image above, notice the light blue box at the top that says "You have feedback! View now." In this case, the teacher has written a note to you about some of your schoolwork. Just click on the "View now" link in order to see your teacher's comments.

DO NOT GET BEHIND! If you consistently work on what your Course Map shows, you can keep up the pace you need to finish by the Target Date. If you let yourself get behind, it will be harder work to try to catch up. *Make it easier on yourself* and do what's on your Course Map assignments *each day!*

Note for those on special schedules: Some students study with us because of schedule irregularities, such as frequent sports competitions, jobs, times of extended illness, etc. These students will need to be prepared to spend extra hours before and after their time away from studying in order to keep pace. Before the time away, be sure to work ahead in the timeline. Upon returning, work to catch back up to the current calendar date.

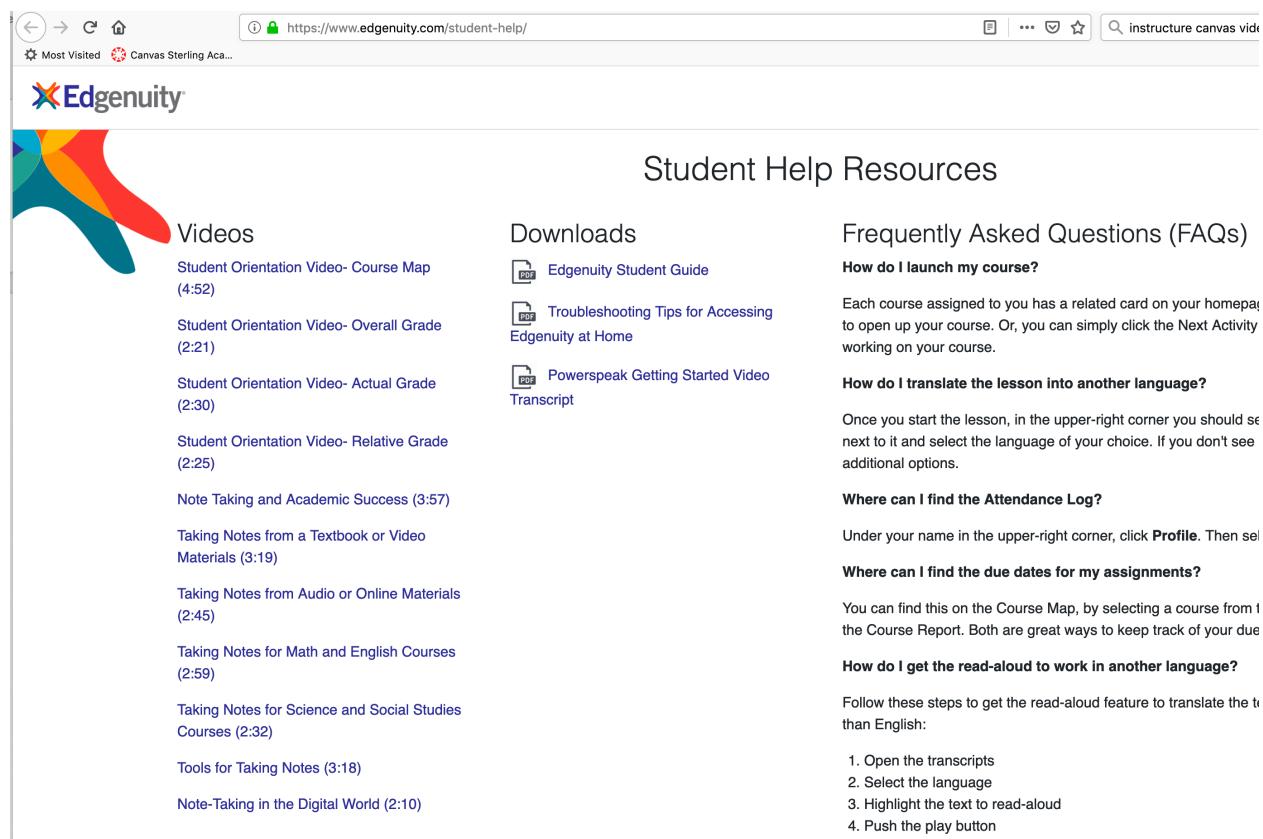
Technical Problems

If you are having technical problems in any of the systems, please contact Mireya Leon (Technology Teacher).

Getting Assistance on How to Use Edgenuity

The above section gave information on what to do in case you encounter technical problems. If you need assistance with how to use Edgenuity, be sure to take advantage of their resources. Some of these are print instructions, while others are videos that show you how to do things.

For assistance on using Edgenuity, while in Edgenuity, go to the upper right corner where your name is, and in the dropdown list choose Help Center. This will take you to a page of videos and downloadable documents, as well as some FAQs, that can help you.



Edgenuity

Student Help Resources

Downloads

- [Edgenuity Student Guide](#)
- [Troubleshooting Tips for Accessing Edgenuity at Home](#)
- [Powerspeak Getting Started Video Transcript](#)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

- [**How do I launch my course?**](#)

Each course assigned to you has a related card on your homepage to open up your course. Or, you can simply click the Next Activity working on your course.
- [**How do I translate the lesson into another language?**](#)

Once you start the lesson, in the upper-right corner you should see next to it and select the language of your choice. If you don't see additional options.
- [**Where can I find the Attendance Log?**](#)

Under your name in the upper-right corner, click **Profile**. Then select
- [**Where can I find the due dates for my assignments?**](#)

You can find this on the Course Map, by selecting a course from the Course Report. Both are great ways to keep track of your due
- [**How do I get the read-aloud to work in another language?**](#)

Follow these steps to get the read-aloud feature to translate the text than English:

 1. Open the transcripts
 2. Select the language
 3. Highlight the text to read-aloud
 4. Push the play button

Highly recommended: Download the Edgenuity Student Guide! It has more information about how to use Edgenuity, with pictures and explanations.

- Videos on Actual Grade and Relative Grade – we only use Overall Grade
- Instructions on how to log in to Edgenuity

Independent Students

Students under 18 must have a parent or guardian be responsible for them; students of legal age, 18 or older, are responsible for themselves.

Grade Level Placement of Students

Sterling Academy is based in Florida, and as such uses Florida academic standards and graduation requirements. Students may study at Sterling from any location; since their school is based in Florida, they will be held to Florida standards no matter their state of residency. Florida's academic structure is as follows: Each full-year-length class, which is equivalent to two semesters, provides one regular academic credit. Florida law (Section 1003.436, Florida Statute) defines a full credit as a minimum 135 hours of bona fide instruction in a designated course of study.

At Sterling Academy, we normally assign students one semester of a course at a time. One semester equals 0.5 credits, so on average, a student should expect to spend about 70-90 hours/14-18 weeks to complete a one-semester course.

A high school student needs to earn 6 credits in an academic year. The total number of credits already earned by a student at the beginning of his or her academic year determines grade level placement/classification for that year.

0 – 5.99 credits completed: 9th grade
6 – 11.99 credits completed: 10th grade
12 – 17.99 credits completed: 11th grade
18 or more credits completed: 12th grade

Middle school students are currently only required to take 4 two-semester courses per year, but may take up to 6 two-semester courses with full-time tuition.

Exception: Students are recommended in 8th grade to take a career-based course. See the course catalog for career-based course choices. Thus, no later than 8th grade, a student could have one semester with 5 courses.

Grading Scale

A - 90-100

B - 80-89

C - 70-79

D – 60-69

F - 59 & below

Sterling calculates GPA for graduating students using a 4.0 scale.

4 = ALL A's

3 = All grades average together as a B

2 = All grades average together as a C

1 = All grades average together as a D

Honors: Many high schools use a weighted GPA scale, which means they add points to honors classes relative to regular classes. A common practice is to add 0.5 points to a student's GPA for each honors class. For example, if a student receives an A in an honors class, it counts as a 4.5 instead of a 4.0.

AP classes are weighted on a 5.0 scale — in an AP class, an A is equivalent to 5.0 instead of 4.0, and a B is equal to 4.0 instead of 3.0. This means students who take AP courses can end up with a GPA higher than 4.0, which can set them apart when applying to colleges. A Dual Enrollment class is raised by 1.0 GPA point

IMPORTANT: Florida requires a minimum 2.0 GPA for high school graduation.

Repetition of Courses

Courses that students have taken and passed with a grade of C or higher cannot be taken again for credit, even if taken at another school. Students and parents who question whether credit can be received for a course should check with Registration before taking the course in question.

Courses that are required for graduation must receive a passing grade. Thus, if a required course is failed, it must be re-taken. If a student fails a course that is not required for graduation, it is up to the student whether or not to re-take that course, or take something different. However, if the same course is not re-taken, the F will remain in the GPA.

Examples:

Example 1: Receive an F in Computer Science. Take Computer Science again and get a C. The F will not count in the GPA.

Example 2: Receive an F in Computer Science. Do not repeat Computer Science but take Digital Arts instead and get a C. Both the F and the C will be factored into the GPA.

Incomplete Grades

Students signing up in full-time status are advised to spend no longer than one year [365 days] to complete their course work. For students signing up for individual courses, those taking only a half credit, six months to completion is advised; those taking two half-credit courses at once, or one full-credit course, twelve months to completion of the credit is advised.

Continuing full-time students may not go on to the next grade level until ALL Core courses of the current grade level have been completed.

For students who are not continuing: If the student is unable to complete requirements for a course before withdrawing, the student will receive a no-credit grade of W. If the student is expelled, the student will receive an F for the unfinished course. Keep in mind that with the 24-credit diploma, a 2.0 overall GPA is required to graduate, and any individual courses required for graduation must have a passing grade.

Individual Courses

Please go to: <https://www.sterling.academy/accredited-virtual-school-catalogs> for course descriptions.

Annual Transcripts

When students complete a grade level, they are given a transcript. The transcript lists the official grade for each course, as well as the current GPA. Students must have a 2.0 GPA in order to graduate, so it is important for students to maintain at least a 2.0 GPA as they progress through high school. (Middle school grades do not count in the GPA toward graduation, only grades received in 9th – 12th grade levels.)

If you have finished a grade level but have not received a transcript, please contact Student Services to request a copy. (Email at StudentServices@sterling.academy or call 626-360-8012)

Advisory Sessions

Parents and/or students can schedule periodic advisory sessions with the Academic Coach or Student Services to ensure all learning and courses taken are on track.

Students and parents must assume responsibility for knowing graduation requirements and for keeping track of progress toward meeting those requirements. Even though there is an advisory process, **the final responsibility for taking the correct courses and completing graduation requirements rests with the student and the parents.**

For assistance in these matters, contact the registration at registration@sterling.academy, or call 626-360-8012.

Course Changes

All requests to drop a course and replace it with another will be addressed on a case by case basis.

Textbooks & Software

In most cases, all material required for the courses is online. There may be books assigned for some courses, such as novels for English classes or historical books for History classes. Some elective courses may require additional purchases, such as software for engineering or supplies for a science experiment. If books are assigned for a course, or if additional materials are needed for a specific course, the student is responsible for locating and purchasing these books or materials.

Class Supplies

Students are required to have the necessary materials as prescribed by an individual teacher. Students may be required to purchase additional supplies/materials, and in that case, the student will incur those charges as an additional expense.

Required Equipment

Students may be required to have a webcam. At the teacher's discretion, course(s) may require, via webcam, an oral mid-term review before the mid-term examination, and an oral final review before taking the final. This may be required at the teacher's discretion.

Attendance

We at Sterling Academy believe that it is vital that students log in on a regular basis in order to be productive students. Additionally, habits developed during school years have a direct correlation to work attendance, which can affect employment in the future. More and more jobs are being done remotely (i.e. at home), so the student does well to learn the discipline early on to “report to work” as expected and make regular progress.

In order to keep pace with the course material and finish by the allotted time, full-time students should expect to spend 30 hours per week engaged in the coursework. While most students will do this 6 hours per day, 5 days per week, a student can choose any arrangement in which to schedule the 30 hours per week. However, if a student is devoting less than 30 hours per week to studying, this will result in becoming behind in studies and may result in not finishing the courses by the end of the allotted time.

Students are expected to log in on a regular basis, and coursework is to be completed on a regular basis. If extenuating circumstances are going to prevent a student from completing assignments for an extended period of time, he or she must contact Student Services or registration. Students may be dropped from the program if there is no coursework completed or no teacher contact over an extended period of time. When a student is expelled from the school for this reason, for any student under state compulsory attendance age, Sterling Academy may contact his or her local public school to notify them of truancy.

College Admissions Tests

All college-bound Sterling Academy students are expected to take the PSAT in 10th or 11th grade, and the SAT or ACT in 11th or 12th grade. Students are encouraged (but not required) to take optional SAT Subject Tests in one or more areas where they believe they are academically strong.

The College Board code for Sterling Academy is **102295**. You must include this code when you apply for the test, and for reporting the scores.

How do I register for the SAT exam?

To register online go here:

<http://sat.collegeboard.org/register>

How and when do I register for the ACT exam?

You can sign up for the ACT exam by going to this URL:

<http://www.actstudent.org/regist/index.html>

You must sign up at least a month ahead of time.

If you would like assistance in signing up for a test, contact the College & Career Counselor, or you may contact Student Services or Registration at 626-360-8012.

High School Diploma Graduation Requirements

Students must complete 24 academic credits in grades 9-12 and maintain a 2.0 cumulative grade point average (GPA).

These minimum state standards also require that the 24 course credits be distributed as follows:

- Four credits in English, with major concentration in composition and literature
- Four credits in mathematics, with at least one credit must be in Algebra I, and one credit in Geometry
- Three credits in science, two of which must have a laboratory component, and one of which must be Biology
- One credit in American history
- One credit in world history, including a comparative study of all major political systems
- One half credit in economics
- One half credit in personal financial literacy (required for students entering grade nine 2023-2024 and thereafter.)
- One half credit in American government, including study of the U.S. Constitution and the structure of the state and local government
- One credit in the fine arts
- One credit in physical education to include the integration of health
- Note: Although foreign language is not a requirement for graduation, nearly all colleges and universities require a student to have had two credits of the same foreign language in high school.

The above graduation requirements are required by the state of Florida, where Sterling Academy is based. Sterling Academy has additional requirements for graduation, for all students first enrolling with Sterling Academy in 2013 or later:

[Sterling Academy courses required for graduation]

- World Cultural Geography (generally taken in 9th grade)
 - In a global society, it is crucial for students to know their geography

Meeting Graduation Requirements

It is the responsibility of all students to make sure they have completed all the requirements for graduation. The Registration/Student Services, Academic Coach, and the Principal can assist with questions related to graduation requirements.

Transfer students: Please note that in order to graduate from Sterling Academy, at least 6 credits of your high school courses must be taken from Sterling Academy.

Graduation

Sterling Academy does not offer a formal graduation ceremony. Students will be conferred a high school diploma upon successful completion of all necessary coursework.

Withdrawals/ Drop outs

A student who withdraws from school for any cause **must contact the office to obtain a withdrawal form**, which must be properly filled out and returned. In addition, students or parents of students who are withdrawing or dropping out need to fill out an exit survey.

Students who withdraw or drop out of school must pay all past due payments. Students who do not clear all debts will not be allowed to re-enter school until this is corrected. Also, transcripts will not be released to the student or to other schools until all money due has been paid.

Transcript Requests

Students may request unofficial transcripts to be sent to their home, and official transcripts to be sent to other schools or colleges. No transcripts will be sent to students, parents, or other schools unless all money due to the school has been paid.

Integrity

All work submitted by the student must have been completed by that student, without direct help. "Direct help" means being given answers to questions by someone else, or having sentences written/dictated by someone else, or significant assistance in this manner. Work must also not be plagiarized or generated by AI.

Plagiarism

The administration and teachers at Sterling Academy want our students to truly learn the material they are studying. In order to do so, it is important that students actually process the information they are working on. When students read material to learn about a topic, the best way to make sure they have understood it is to talk or write about the material in their own words.

To simply copy words from someone else and submit them for an assignment does not give you the necessary opportunity to process and understand the material, and it does not give the teachers an idea of what you have truly learned. This is one reason that copying words from other sources and pasting them into your assignments is not acceptable.

Another reason that copying and pasting words into your assignments is unacceptable is simply that it's prohibited throughout academia. It is prohibited mainly for the reason stated above, but also because the words belong to someone else, and therefore using their words as your own is akin to stealing.

In colleges and universities, students may be expelled for plagiarism. There have even been cases where someone who had finished college and gotten a degree, and later it was found they had plagiarized their work, and their degree was then rescinded. People have lost their jobs or had their careers damaged for plagiarizing.

The definition of plagiarism is: Copying or imitating the language, ideas, and thoughts of another writer and passing them off as your own original work. Specific examples of plagiarism that will not be tolerated are:

- Copying or rephrasing someone else's work.
- Having someone else write an assignment or rephrase any part of an assignment (not just proofread it).
- Directly copying student aids (for example, Brainly), critical sources, or reference materials in part or in whole without acknowledgment.
- Indirect reproduction of students' aids, such as BrainlyChegg, critical sources, or reference materials by rephrasing ideas borrowed from them without acknowledgment.

Likewise, when submitting assignments for a foreign language course, all written work must be from the student. Translations done from web translating services are considered unacceptable and fall under the same punishments as plagiarism.

Furthermore, use of artificial intelligence software such as ChatGPT, Bard, and CoPilot to create submitted work falls under the disciplinary category of plagiarism, since this is not the student's own work. Again, as stated above, "the best way to make sure [students] have understood [the material] is to talk or write about the material in their own words." Asking AI to write a paper for you does not accomplish this at all and is considered cheating.

Note: There are legitimate student uses for AI, such as for brainstorming ideas or for the early stages of research, to help guide you what direction to seek for finding things related to your research topic. (Keep in mind that AI is still new and sometimes generates blatantly false information.) However, don't forget that any copying of AI-generated material to use in a paper is still plagiarism, even though the output may seem unique. If you didn't write it in your own words, it's plagiarism. You copied from AI.

To ensure that students at Sterling Academy do not plagiarize, the following procedure is in effect.

- **First offense:** The student must re-do the assignment. The teacher will:
 - Give the student a document about plagiarism that includes examples of what is and is not plagiarism.
 - Talk to the parent about the issue.
 - Put the incident on the student's discipline record.
 - The student must re-submit the assignment, having done their own work.
- **Second offense:** The student must re-do the assignment but will receive reduced credit.
 - The student must re-submit the assignment, having done their own work, but will only get 50% of the credit (e.g. an essay that would get an 80% would get a grade of 40%).
 - The incident will go on the student's discipline record.
- **Third offense:** The teacher will notify Instructional Manager. A video meeting will be scheduled with the student, parent, teacher, and Instructional Manager.
 - The student must re-submit the assignment, having done their own work, but will only get 50% of the credit (e.g. an essay that would get an 80% would get a grade of 40%).
 - The incident will go on the student's discipline record.
- **Fourth offense:** The student will have to re-do the assignment, and the plagiarism will be noted on the student's transcript.
 - The student must re-submit the assignment, having done their own work, but will get a 0% for the assignment. The course cannot be considered

- complete and no grade or credit will be issued until the assignment has been re-done satisfactorily.
- This will be listed on the transcript sent to other schools and colleges as the first incident of plagiarism.
- **Fifth offense:** The student will fail the course.
 - The student will fail the course in which the fifth offense occurred. If the course is not required for graduation, there will be no opportunity to re-take it. If the course is required for graduation, the student will have to start over, but the first F will remain and will be calculated into the GPA.
 - This will be listed on the transcript sent to other schools and colleges as the second incident of plagiarism.
- **Sixth offense:** Expulsion from school. All unfinished assignments in all courses will receive zeroes for GPA calculation. The transcript will note that the student was expelled for three incidents of plagiarism.

Access to and Release of Records

Except for directory information (noted below in the section Directory Information), Sterling Academy shall not permit access to or release of educational records or personally identifiable information to parties without prior written consent of the parent or eligible student, except for the following persons or organizations:

- School officials with legitimate educational interest;
- Other schools to which a student is transferring;
- Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
- Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
- Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
- Accrediting organizations;
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
- Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
- State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.

A student account must be in good standing before any records will be released to schools, parents, or students. If the student account has an outstanding balance, then no records will be released until the account is restored to good standing. An account is restored to good standing when all outstanding balances are paid in full.

Directory Information

Certain information from student education records is considered "directory information," as is specified in this paragraph. A parent/guardian or eligible student may request that such information not be designated as directory information in nature. In the absence of this request, such information will not be considered confidential and may be disclosed upon request to valid parties (i.e. employers).

Directory information is as follows: 1) Each student's name, address, and telephone number; 2) the date and place of birth; and 3) dates of enrollment, and 4) awards received during the time enrolled in Sterling Academy.

Student-Submitted Material for the Web

Sterling Academy has a student website where student team members write articles and feature news about or creations of students at Sterling Academy. All students are welcome and encouraged to submit material for this page. Submissions may be videos, slide shows, photographs, artwork, poetry or short stories, or similar items. Student and parent will sign a release form before submissions are published.

Policy on Non-discrimination

Sterling Academy does not discriminate on the basis of color, marital status, sex, age, race, gender, sexual orientation, creed, handicap, religion, native language, or national origin in its educational programs and activities and the employment and admission practices under which it operates and will honor all appropriate laws relating to discrimination.

Appropriate Behavior

Be sure to abide by these guidelines when conversing with others online:

- All interactions with teachers, staff, and other students should be conducted with politeness.
- Review your messages before sending them. Remove easily misinterpreted language and proofread for typos.
- Communication should be in proper English, not using texting-style spelling or abbreviations, or slang.
- Be constructive with your criticism, not hurtful.
- Focus your responses on the questions or issues being discussed, not on the individuals involved. If something has made you frustrated or angry, when presenting the issue to the person involved, calmly explain the details of the situation; do not be judgmental or accusatory.
- Respect other people's privacy. Don't broadcast online discussions, or post or forward a message to other people that someone intended to be only seen by you.
- Avoid sarcasm and complaining.
- Profanity is unacceptable in any communication within the school.
- Never use derogatory comments, including those regarding race, age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ability, political persuasion, body type, physical or mental health, or access issues.
- Never engage in harassment (repeated posting of unwelcome messages to another person).
- Never insult, attack, or threaten another person.

- Pretending to be someone other than yourself is strictly prohibited.

Sterling Academy Internet Safety/Computer Acceptable Use Rules

1. The computer network in Sterling Academy is provided to students and staff for educational and research purposes only.
2. Use only your own user name and password, and do not divulge these to anyone.
3. Do not aid anyone in gaining unauthorized access to password-protected courses.
4. Sterling Academy is NOT responsible for any delays, non- or mis-delivery of e-mail, or any loss of data as a result of using the Internet.
5. The use of the Internet is a privilege. Any user identified as a security risk or having a history of problems with the use of computer systems will have his/her system access severely limited.
6. The Internet is unregulated and the information found on the Internet has not been verified for accuracy. Each user must exercise critical thinking skills when using Internet resources as source material for schoolwork. Sterling Academy will not be held responsible for the accuracy or quality of the information obtained from the Internet.
7. No user should do anything which would cause disruption of network use by other users.
8. Students should not reveal any personal information (description, telephone numbers, address, etc.) about themselves or other students over the Internet. They should not contact anyone they have met using Internet resources without the knowledge and permission of their parents.
9. Students should not access sites or send material over the network that contains obscene, abusive, threatening, or illegal material. Users should not deliberately use the computer to annoy or harass others with language, images or threats.
10. If the student identifies or perceives a security problem (for example, being able to access files that should not be available), the student should immediately notify Sterling Academy. The student must NOT demonstrate the problem to other students.
11. All computer users in the Sterling Academy system must adhere to the copyright law regarding copying and installing computer programs. The law states that it is illegal to make or distribute copies of copyrighted software without authorization.

The rules in this section and the previous section “Appropriate Behavior” are not to be considered an all-encompassing set of rules; good judgment must be used in every situation.

Discipline

The previous two sections list specific rules for appropriate behavior and acceptable computer use at Sterling Academy. If these rules are not followed, disciplinary action will be taken against the student who has broken the rules. Action taken will depend on the

nature of the infraction. Possible action includes restrictions to access of the online school, long-term suspension, and/or expulsion from Sterling Academy.

Accessory to Serious Violations

A student who is an accessory to a serious offense is guilty of misconduct and can be punished just as if he had committed the offense. This means that a student is not to do anything that might cause, encourage, or assist a serious violation to take place.